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ABSTRACT

This university independent course of study on the contemporary American novel is presented to bring to light a source of social significance in America. Four novels are studied: Upton Sinclair's "The Jungle," John Steinbeck's "The Grapes of Wrath" and "Of Mice and Men," and Harper Lee's "To Kill a Mockingbird." Nine assignments are included. (CK)

EDO 58200

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Extramural Independent Study Center

THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS / AT LAWRENCE

ED058200

HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH IV
SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE AMERICAN NOVEL, 1900-1950

¼ Unit Credit

1969 (Reprinted 1971)

Course Prepared by

James A. Phillips
Shawnee Mission West High School
Overland Park, Kansas

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UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS
Lawrence, Kansas

IMPORTANT!

GUIDELINES FOR INDEPENDENT STUDY

In beginning independent study, you must remember there is a greater personal responsibility for achievement than in a course taken in residence. Much that ordinarily is recited in the classroom must be written out in independent study. Therefore, as you prepare each assignment, you must exercise your best judgment.

The normal time allowed for the completion of the course is twelve months from the date of enrollment. If you are unable to complete the course within the twelve-month period, a six months' extension will be granted upon payment of a $5 fee prior to the normal expiration date. All extensions are effective on the expiration date.

To help you successfully complete this course, the Extramural Independent Study Center suggests the following:

1. *Work with regularity.* You are urged to accomplish a regular amount of work each week. However, you are requested to send in your second lesson after the first one has been returned. If you wait too long between assignments, you may lose the continuity of your work. You MAY NOT, however, send in more than five assignments in a seven-day period unless you have special permission from your instructor.

During vacation periods many instructors are away from the campus and your assignments may have to be forwarded. If you need to complete this course by a certain time, you should start work early enough that a slight delay during vacations will not adversely affect your schedule.

2. *Observe proper manuscript form.* All assignments must be submitted on the special paper designed for independent study. (See the Sample Lesson at the back of this syllabus.) A pad is included with your syllabus, and you may order additional pads from the Center for $1.25 each.

(a) Always write your name, address, the course name and number, the number of the assignment and the page number at the top of each page. Either type your answers double-spaced or write them neatly in black or blue-black ink, using only one side of the paper. In submitting an assignment, fold all the pages of the assignment together with the heading on the outside. (For illustration see the Sample Lesson.) (b) Mail each completed assignment separately to the Center, making sure that you mail the assignments in numerical order and that the envelope bears the correct postage. (It is a good idea to keep a copy of your work.) Be sure to notify the Center of any change of name or address. Following the suggested format will speed the return of your lessons.

3. *Use these study suggestions.* (a) Study the entire reading assignment before working with the questions. (b) Answer mentally as many of the assigned questions as you can. Consult your texts and other media for additional information. Make notes. (c) Study all of your notes, organize them, and begin to write. (d) Although you are free to use your texts, you should avoid parroting the writer's words, and when a direct quotation is necessary, identify the author, title, and appropriate page numbers. Plagiarism will result in your being dropped from the course. (e) To help in review, some students find it best to write down questions before answering them. (f) Review frequently. Exams and formal papers are required periodically unless your instructor exempts you from such progress checks. (g) If you need information about any assignment, write to your instructor on a separate sheet of paper and enclose it in an assignment. Your instructor is always willing to help you explore ideas initiated by the course and to carry on a dialogue with you.

4. *Note the rules governing examination accreditation.* Your final examination is very important. The application should be mailed in at least a week before the examination date.

College level examinations, when taken in Kansas, must be given by the Extramural Independent Study Center at the University of Kansas, by officials of one of the other state colleges, or by supervisors at one of the Correspondence Examination Centers in the state. (For a list of Examination Centers see the Schedule of Examinations sent with your course material.)

If you wish your credits to apply toward a degree at an accredited Kansas college or university, other than a state institution, you may

make arrangements with the dean of that college to have your examination supervised there. Out-of-state enrollees must arrange with officials of an accredited college to have their examinations proctored.

If there is no accredited college in your vicinity, you may arrange for supervision with the local superintendent of schools or a secondary school principal.

High School course examinations, given in any state, should be administered by your principal or superintendent of schools. You must make your own arrangements for supervision.

5. *Give us your ideas and opinions.* It is our wish that you derive as much benefit as possible from this course, and we want to know to what extent it has met your needs. Because all courses are in a continuous state of revision, you will assist us greatly by filling out the evaluation form which will be sent with your grade. There is room for special comments or suggestions, and all of the information will be considered in revising or adapting the syllabus material. If during the course of instruction you wish to make comments or inquiries that you feel will not benefit your instructor, you may send them to the Extramural Independent Study Center. Regardless of prior comments, PLEASE FILL OUT AND RETURN the form sent with your grade.

The Student Services staff is available to help with any problems of an administrative or instructional nature requiring special attention.

6. *Note the refunds and extra charges.* You may obtain a partial refund of fees only if you apply for it within three months of the date of your registration. If no more than five assignments have been completed, the course fee minus $5 for registration and $2 for each corrected lesson will be returned to you. Course material fees or postage may not be refunded.

7. *Within a six-weeks' free drop period, full refund will be made for textbooks returned to the Kansas Union Book Store or to the University Book Store in Manhattan.* The texts must be new, unmarked, and have the price stickers on the books. Damaged books, including mail damage, must be sold as used books. Shipping charges are never refundable.

8. *Remember textbook resale.* Upon completion of a course, the K.U. and Manhattan bookstores will buy back books if they are currently used for independent study. The price is one-half the current new price.

Social Consciousness in the American Novel, 1900-1950

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PREFACE

One of the best aspects of living in America in the middle of the twentieth century is the freedom which we enjoy. For most of us, the laws concerning income tax, Selective Service, Social Security--and such--are tolerable because in most matters we have freedom of choice. Indeed, our daily routine is governed by countless examples of choices we have made, usually so long ago that we don't remember making them. For us, getting up, getting dressed, eating breakfast, brushing our teeth, and driving to school or work are natural, almost automatic actions.

How we start the day is routine, but each of us approaches it a little differently. Consider the manner by which we are awakened. Maybe that clever television commercial persuaded us it would be best to awaken to a snooze-alarm made by the Big Buzz Company. As we are getting dressed, we may put on the same sort of outfit everyone is wearing these days. For breakfast we may eat that cereal which contains more than 100% of the adult-minimum-daily requirement. The toothpaste we use may have been selected because it was recommended by the Americans for Cavity Control. The car we drive may be the make we've always driven or the model that has a sporty look or it may be the make and model given a high rating by one of the many testing services. What we do is governed by our preferences, which are governed by our experiences. The source of the experiences was our everyday life and both the subtle and overt influences around us.

In today's news-satiated society the public is bombarded daily with messages. One of the tasks faced by every intelligent citizen is what to believe and what to disbelieve. If we are to survive in a typical day--which some researchers contend is filled with thousands of appeals to action--we are forced to make decisions. Advertising is one of these overt molding forces in our lives. Even if the commercial or advertisement employs the soft-sell approach, we know there's a motive behind the message. The sponsor wants us to buy his car, smoke his cigarette, drink his beer, and use his laundry soap. He may have an altruistic message urging us to prevent forest fires, stop smoking, or go to church--but he is nonetheless encouraging us to do his bidding.

Our actions are also influenced, one way or the other, by the sage advice our elders are all too free to dispense: "a penny saved is a penny earned," "a watched kettle never boils," "too many cooks spoil the broth," and the old standby "why, when I was your age . . ."

When a politician shouts, "I like Ike" or a President says, "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country" or a spokesman for a minority group says, "I have a dream . . .," we respond.

There are countless methods used to sway us. The one method which has had the most social significance as our country has developed during this century has been literature. In this module we will consider four outstanding novels which have been instrumental in shaping social consciousness in this century.

To help me evaluate your understanding of the novels, I have included several pertinent questions for you to answer after finishing each assignment. For the first five lessons, while we are getting acquainted, all students will be given the same questions to answer. For the final four lessons, however, I will tell each of you personally the questions you are to answer. When doing this, I will consider both your interests and your abilities. For those students progressing well, I will choose questions which should challenge them into making more critical judgments and evaluations. For students having difficulty, I will choose questions which lend themselves to a less esoteric but nonetheless a significant analysis and understanding of the stories.

This leads us to a joint responsibility, that of evaluating your progress. Since we will not be in a classroom talking to each other, stating one idea and either building on it or abandoning it, we must communicate in writing. If I do not express myself clearly, we are off to a shaky start. My directions must be both explicit and understandable if I am to expect you to follow them. Similarly, your written response to these directions must communicate to me exactly what you mean. I can't stop you with a quizzical expression on my face and you can't backtrack to clarify your explanation with an "I mean . . ." or a "You know . . ." When I return your papers, I hope that the comments I have made on them will be readily understandable and will help you in the writing of future papers. It seems logical, therefore, that you understand my evaluation of one lesson and profit from it before you begin the next lesson. There is nothing wrong with immediately reading as many of the selections as you become interested in, but be sure to answer new questions only after all preceding answers have been evaluated and returned to you. If it is necessary for you to revise an unsatisfactory answer, make this revision and let me evaluate it before you submit subsequent written work.

The manuscript requirements for this course probably are similar to those with which you are already familiar. (a) Always write your name, address, the course name and number, the number of the assignment, and the page number at the top of each page of the paper. You should type your answers or write them neatly and legibly in black or blue-black ink, using only one side of the paper, double-spacing, and leaving a two-inch margin on the left-hand side of the paper for the instructor's corrections. (b) You should purchase the special paper designed for independent study by the Extramural Independent Study Center and you should use it for all your work in this course.

Texts:

Upton Sinclair. The Jungle. Signet Classic, 60¢.

John Steinbeck. The Grapes of Wrath. Bantam Books, 95¢.

John Steinbeck. Of Mice and Men. Bantam Classic, 60¢.

Harold Clurman, ed. Famous American Plays of the 1930's. Laurel Drama Series (Dell), 75¢.

Harper Lee. To Kill a Mockingbird. Popular Library, 60¢.

These texts may be purchased from the Kansas Union Book Store, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas 66044, or the University Book Store, 623 N. Manhattan Ave., Manhattan, Kansas 66502. They will be sent C.O.D.

Here are a few guidelines for you to follow when answering questions: (a) Always write the question and follow it with your answer. (b) Feel free to consult your book and notes when answering assignment questions, but beware of copying verbatim from your books except when a direct quotation is called for as part of the answer. In such instances, quotations must be identified by author, title, and appropriate page numbers. (Evidence that a student is representing someone else's work as his own may result in his being dropped from the correspondence rolls.) (c) For some of the questions there will be no "right" or "wrong" answer: these questions are designed to make you organize your answers carefully, supporting personal interpretations and opinions with reasons, concrete details, and specific examples. Perhaps the most important factor determining the quality of written work is proofreading. You are, of course, expected to express your ideas in grammatically correct sentences. Typographical errors, misspellings, and inadvertent mistakes can be virtually eliminated if you follow a basic, simple procedure: once you feel your paper is ready to mail, put it aside for at least one day; then re-examine it conscientiously. You will be amazed by the weaknesses and errors which you had overlooked!

In writing this module, I have tried to make my vocabulary choice both pertinent and understandable. High school seniors should know the meaning of almost every word in the module. If you encounter a word new to you, it would be beneficial for you to take a minute to look up the word and learn its meaning. If it is a word that comes naturally into conversation, speak it. If it seems more appropriate for written use, employ it in themes or letters. Even if you feel the word is not appropriate for your oral or written usage, at least be sure you know it well enough to recognize and understand it the next time you see it.

If you would like an "after-class" conference for assistance or additional information, write me a note on a separate piece of paper and enclose it with

the regular assignment. Naturally, you will not expect answers to problems which you yourself can solve with a little additional thought or effort. Any question on texts, reference books, academic credit, further enrollment, examinations, and similar topics should be sent to the Director of the Extramural Independent Study Center, The University of Kansas, Extension Building, Lawrence, Kansas 66044.

Since this module is valued at one-fourth unit of credit, I would suggest that you plan to complete one lesson a week. In that way, you will be working at approximately the same rate as students regularly enrolled in school. The evaluating and returning of papers may take slightly longer during the summer than during the academic year, so start early if you must have the module completed during the summer.

Now that we've gone over the necessary introductory material, it's time to get started on Assignment I.

ASSIGNMENT I

For our purposes of examining novels with a social message, the *novella* of the thirteenth century will be the starting point. Although really little more than a group of short stories with a simple tying-together structure, the *novella* was popular because it contained "news" of a sensational nature. (The word novel, of course, meant news in its original usage.) Any influence the *novella* had was related to the reader's approval of or deprecation of sensationalism.

In 1578, John Lyly wrote the *pastoral* (rustic, georgic) *romance* Eupheus or The Anatomy of Wit, a long tale which allowed Lyly to express his own ideas of "How to be Clever" (the subtitle of the book) through the characters. Within two years, Lyly brought out a sequel, Eupheus and His England, which praised England but was still highly romantic in form. Lyly's novels became so popular that speaking euphemistically (using a word like deprived for the more common word poor) became a vogue in conversation.

In 1590, Sir Philip Sidney, prodded by his sister and her lady friends, retired to the country and spent a few weeks writing Arcadia. Forsaking Lyly's static plot, Sidney filled his book with violent action followed by a happy ending which he reached rather coincidentally and arbitrarily.

About this same time there appeared the *picaresque* novel, based on the adventures of a chivalrous hero (Spanish-picaro) wandering in search of adventure. Cervante's moralistic Don Quixote (1605) is the most widely known *picaresque* novel. Don Quixote's attempts to perform good deeds and evoke sound moral action were praiseworthily drawn even if he was unsuccessful. Old novels are constantly being revamped for today's culture: the musical Man from La Mancha comes from Don Quixote.

The "novels" I have mentioned thus far and those I will mention next all have in common a didactic message: the reader would see the results of different types of behavior and be influenced. One important factor is obviously the reader. Poverty-stricken, illiterate people could neither afford nor read novels, so writers ignored them. With The Pilgrim's Progress from this World to That Which Is to Come Delivered under the Similitude of a Dream Wherein Is Discovered the Manner of his Setting Out, his Dangerous Journey and safe Arrival at the Desired Country (1678), however, the world of didactic

literature was opened to the poor. John Bunyan's book, crudely printed on cheap paper and employing constant use of dialogue, appealed to both the pocketbook and the limited intelligence of the poor. Pilgrim's Progress enjoyed excellent circulation, but the many readers often failed to understand Bunyan's message and merely enjoyed the story, as was the case with his subsequent books. By the time of Bunyan's death, much prose fiction was the antithesis of his, ridiculing his views or stressing more worldly pleasures as is shown by the label given to also popular French reactionary fiction: *chroniques scandaleuses*.

An element of realism subsequently crept into the novel, particularly through the literary works of Daniel Defoe and Jonathan Swift. When Samuel Richardson adapted to a longer form the style of the countless formletters he had designed for paying a bill, hiring a worker, and carrying on such business affairs, he wrote Pamela (1740), a book many critics regard as the first true novel: a long fiction work which had an overall unity built around the working out of a central problem. Richardson's formletters were utilitarian, but they also included moral precepts because their writer tended to be emotionally involved in all that he did. Here quoted from Lionel Stevenson's The English Novel is a statement Richardson made about Pamela:

> "But when I recollect what had, so many years before, been told me by my friend, I thought the story, if written in an easy and natural manner, suitable to the simplicity of it, might possibly introduce a new species of writing, that might possibly turn young people into a course of reading different from the pomp and parade of romance-writing, and dismissing the improbable and marvellous, with which novels generally abound, might tend to promote the cause of religion and virtue."

That he had a moral purpose is made clear in the complete title which, understandably, has since been shortened to either the first or the first four words:

> Pamela: or, Virtue Rewarded. In a Series of Familiar Letters from a beautiful Young Damsel, to her Parents. Now first published in order to cultivate the Principles of Virtue and Religion in the Minds of the Youth of Both Sexes. A Narrative which has its Foundation in Truth and Nature; and at the same time that it agreeably entertains, by a variety of curious and affecting Incidents, is entirely divested of all those Images, which, in too many Pieces calculated for Amusement only, tend to inflame the Minds they should Instruct.

Before we look at the novels, it would be beneficial to make the general statement that the novel has a unique advantage in that the length allows the author plenty of time to state, develop, repeat, and exemplify his message. If he chooses an obvious approach, he has hundreds of pages to pound his ideas into the consciousness of the reader. Similarly, he may use his pages

to build a subtle thesis which he hopes will gradually work itself from the subconscious to the conscious mind of the reader. Perhaps the author's biggest task is to keep the reader interested in the message which was written to influence him. For us today it is difficult to imagine that children in colonial times enjoyed learning the alphabet by saying rhymes such as "A is for Adam, whose fall touched us all . . ." The unknown writer of this rhyme, however, felt it to be the best way to get across his message.

Now let's examine a didactic poem written at the turn of the century. When the poet and lecturer Edwin Markham saw Jean Millet's poignant painting "The Man with the Hoe," he was so moved that he felt he must put into words the effect the painting had had on him. The result was his famous poem (January 15, 1899) which he gave the same title as the painting.

The Man with the Hoe

God made man in His own image
In the image of God He made him.--Genesis

Bowed by the weight of centuries he leans
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,
The emptiness of ages in his face,
And on his back the burden of the world.
Who made him dead to rapture and despair,
A thing that grieves not and that never hopes,
Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox?
Who loosened and let down this brutal jaw?
Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow?
Whose breath blew out the light within this brain?

In this the Thing the Lord God made and gave
To have dominion over sea and land;
To trace the stars and search the heavens for power;
To feel the passion of Eternity?
Is this the dream He dreamed who shaped the suns
And marked their ways upon the ancient deep?
Down all the caverns of Hell to their last gulf
There is no shape more terrible than this--
More tongues with censure of the world's blind greed--
More filled with signs and portents for the soul--
More packed with danger to the universe.

What gulfs between him and the seraphim!
Slave of the wheel of labor, what to him
Are Plato and the swing of Pleiades?
What the long reaches of the peaks of song,
The rift of dawn, the reddening of the rose?
Through this dread shape the suffering ages look;
Time's tragedy is in that aching stoop;
Through this dread shape humanity betrayed,
Plundered, profaned, and disinherited,
Cries protest to the Judges of the World,
A protest that is also prophecy.

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
Is this the handiwork you give to God,
This monstrous thing distorted and soul-quenched?
How will you ever straighten up this shape;
Touch it again with immortality;
Give back the upward looking and the light;
Rebuild in it the music and the dream;

Make right the immemorial infamies,
Perfidious wrongs, immedicable woes?

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
How will the Future reckon with this man:
How answer his brute question in that hour
When whirlwinds of rebellion shake all shores?
How will it be with kingdoms and with kings--
With those who shaped him to the thing he is--
When this dumb terror shall rise to judge the world,
After the silence of the centuries?

Markham used language his audience would understand and respond to. The economic success ($250,000 in 33 years; translation into forty languages) of the poem was merely incidental; what was important was that it became a watchword for the underprivileged workingman. People read the poem, understood its message, and decided to try to improve their wretched lot in life.

Incidentally, other Markham poems have delivered messages thought important. The final four lines of "Lincoln, the Man of the People" (1900) so inspired a Yugoslavian artisan that he put them on the reverse of a coin honoring John F. Kennedy:

And when he fell in whirlwind, he went down.
As when a lordly cedar, green with boughs.
Goes down with a great shout upon the hills,
And leaves a lonesome place against the sky.

Writing Assignment:

Below are four questions designed to further your understanding of "The Man with the Hoe" as an important instrument of social protest. For this assignment, choose TWO of the questions and answer each of them in a paragraph of approximately 250-400 words. Be sure that each paragraph contains a topic sentence which tells your main idea; the remainder of the paragraph should support your idea, making it forceful and believable.

1. Soon after its publication, this poem became known as "the battle cry of the next thousand years." Do you feel that this statement is an exaggeration? Why?

2. This poem is written in the familiar poetic form of blank verse (unrhymed iambic pentameter). On the whole, do you feel that there are enough poetic characteristics in "The Man with the Hoe" to make it significant as poetry rather than as didactic literature? (Here poetry means the highest form of literature. Look up didactic to clarify your approach to the question.) Why?

3. Find three descriptions in the poem which create a good picture of the pathetic life of the workers. Tell why you chose each of the three.

4. Assuming that business interests were exploiting workers, tell what would be the reaction of both the oppressors and the oppressed to the last two lines of the poem.

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ASSIGNMENT II

Reading Assignment: The Jungle

Not too many years ago, restaurants proudly displayed signs that their kitchens were open for inspection. Today one seldom sees these signs because we take it for granted that a restaurant's kitchen will be spic and span, even cleaner than the dining rooms. As the percentage of our population earning money through part-time work increases, more people are exposed to the procedures involved in the preparation of food. How often have you heard someone say, "I wouldn't eat in that place if you paid me. When I worked there I saw how they fixed the food." Granted that people often tend to exaggerate, granted that probably only one soft drink bottle out of every million has a dead rat in it, granted that the dead beetle in the potato chip package was an unfortunate accident, we still are vitally concerned about the preparation of anything we eat.

This concern is not a fetish peculiar to our time, however. In the written records of nearly every civilization can be found attempts to protect people from impure food. As early as the Book of Leviticus in The Bible can be found food laws, and local authorities adopted provisions to stop impure food practices as early as the thirteenth century. From 1850-1875 city boards of health were established to regulate the marketing of meat and milk, with dairy associations being granted control over dairy products. After 1875 the first truly significant control over food came with the passage of the first Federal Food and Drugs Act and the Meat Inspection Act of 1906. The forces which crusaded for the passage of these acts were many, but primary credit goes to two individuals.

From 1883 to 1914, Dr. Harvey W. Wiley, Chief of the Bureau of Chemistry, Department of Agriculture, fought desperately to bring about the passage of legislation that would protect the American consumer from nefarious food practices.

The other individual considered largely responsible for the passage of these life-saving acts was neither a chemist nor a politician. He was a writer, an intelligent man who had entered the City College of New York when he was 14. To help finance his education, he turned out the pulp fiction so popular at the time. Success eluded him early in life, however, when for five years he was forced to support his family on less than $400 a year. From his first five novels, published from 1901 to 1906, came less than a thousand dollars

in royalties. After the serialized publication of The Jungle in the Socialist weekly The Appeal to Reason in 1906, the financial worries of Upton Sinclair were ended. The success of The Jungle, a book rejected by the first five publishers Sinclair contacted, and a position on Theodore Roosevelt's meat-packing investigation board ended the writer's problems. Even the failure of the Englewood, New Jersey, socialistic Helicon Home he supported with royalties from The Jungle did not discourage Sinclair from continuing to devote his efforts to the cause of human welfare. In the following years he dealt with the Colorado coal strike, the Teapot Dome scandal, the film industry, evangelism, and education.

Before we begin our discussion of Sinclair's book, let's take a quick look at the growth of the meat-packing industry in America. In 1641 William Pynchon founded the first meat-packing house in Springfield, Massachusetts. He packed pork in salt and shipped it to the West Indies, islands just then lost by England because of civil war brought on by the revolt of the Puritans against Charles I. Communities which did not raise their own meat animals looked to packing houses for a meat supply. Before the days of artificial refrigeration, meat packing was exclusively a winter industry. The natural ice cut from rivers and lakes during the winter was stored in ice houses and subsequently used by meat packers to extend their operations into a few non-winter months. The development of refrigerated railway cars in the 1880's made possible long-range distribution of meat, especially to the eastern cities. By the turn of the century, as assembly-line procedures became more efficient, all that the meat packers needed was the labor to get the meat ready for delivery to the public. As things turned out, getting labor was no problem. In fact, big business could get all the labor it needed from a population of 76,000,000 and on whatever terms big business felt like offering. Each new group of immigrants--be they German, Irish, Bohemian, Polish, or Lithuanian--provided a vast labor pool from which the meat packers could choose the big, strong, healthy workers needed in their plants. Each disenchanted nationality was replaced by an optimistic nationality which in turn became disenchanted and was replaced by the next optimistic nationality. As long as there were new immigrants, there was a bounteous labor source.

That the injustices and oppression in the meat-packing (and patent medicine and railroad and oil) industry continued was abominable to literally millions of Americans, but it was a few, a very few, who spoke up. These crusaders for the dignity of the individual were called names such as "red" or "socialist." Theodore Roosevelt gave the name "muckrakers" to those journalists and reformers who exposed corruption in politics and industry. Had not these muckrakers been outspoken, however, it is conjectural how long the injustices would have continued. Be he socialist, muckraker, or any other opprobious person, Upton Sinclair was an important writer. The nine months which he says he spent in a "board cabin, eight feet by ten" gave birth to one of the most important novels of social consciousness ever to be written.

In The Jungle there is corruption everywhere. With the exception of the workers with no supervisory responsibilities, there is no group that is not

replete with scoundrels and/or lechers. Workers with any kind of authority take advantage of their co-workers by extracting bribes, kick-backs, or sexual favors from them. In this authoritarian atmosphere in which the powerful are always right, there is only one abhorred word: unions. Anyone associated with a union can expect a tongue lashing when others are watching, a billy clubbing when backs are turned.

Were the work situation not onerous enough, there were evils outside the factories. Merchants adulterated food. Realtors put impossible conditions in the fine print of contracts. Lawyers who interpreted the contracts for purchasers overlooked the fine print. Crooked politicians bought votes. Policemen accepted bribes and meted out brutality. Judges dispensed justice according to a capitalist's prescription.

This was the atmosphere and environment that Sinclair wrote about in his book. As he said, "I aimed at the public's heart and by accident I hit it in the stomach."

Writing Assignment:

Below are questions related to The Jungle as a novel of social consciousness. Choose ONE question and answer it in a theme of 300-500 words. Be sure to acknowledge the author's words by quotation marks and page references. (I wish to thank those students who are typing their themes. I give no special consideration to typed themes, but my task is made much more agreeable when I am not troubled by almost undecipherable penmanship.)

1. Find passages in which Sinclair describes adulterated food that is purchased by unsuspecting customers. Using these passages as your evidence, tell how dangerous the practice of selling adulterated food can be.

2. Corruption exists on almost every level of society in The Jungle. Choose the one practice not related to the food itself which you feel is the most disreputable and heartless.

3. Politics and politicians take quite a verbal beating from Sinclair. By citing particular situations give a complete description of all levels of political activity in the novel.

4. Marija and Ona both violate the accepted social code regarding morality. Do you feel that there is justification for the action of either woman?

ASSIGNMENT III

Reading Assignment: "Afterword" in The Jungle

The "Afterword" to The Jungle is an excellent example of a short research paper. Robert B. Downs employs a highly readable style to tell his story of The Jungle, Upton Sinclair, muckrakers, and socialism. Notice how he skillfully, through the use of effective transitions, tells his story in an organized manner. Even though he skips from the book to Sinclair to socialism, back to the book, then to muckrakers, then back to the book, the reader feels that everything written is about the same topic, The Jungle. All the items which are seemingly digressions are in actuality related to the social injustices in the America of 1905--and to how a few individuals tried to bring about vital changes. Sinclair's book was about filth and adulteration in the meat-packing industry, but it was also an indictment of the social indifference and/or fear that made possible and even perpetuated the exploitation of labor and consumers. His influence, and that of other muckrakers, extended information to thousands of citizens who previously had bemoaned their lamentable situation but could find no one better to lash out at than their immediate oppressors. The powers behind the brutish underlings remained unknown, or even worse, unconsidered. Sinclair showed the workers how far-reaching and highly organized the lamentable situation was.

If we are to consider The Jungle from an utilitarian standpoint, we, as Sinclair, must term it a failure. It did not accomplish what the author intended: few converts were won to socialism per se. It did, however, instill ideas in the minds of the readers: maybe banding together is a possible solution; maybe helping those who can't help themselves is a good way to live.

Banding together was important to the two million members of the American Federation of Labor in 1905; the practice of helping those who couldn't help themselves in 1905 was the inception of the far-reaching welfare programs of today.

With the development of a large middle class and a rapid method of communication has come an increasing awareness of social injustice. Jurgis and his family fought for survival in the jungle of Packingtown. At times they were helped by social workers, but on the whole they were on their own. Today we have in America a highly organized method of aiding the unfortunate members of society. On the local level there are charity drives such as United Fund; on the national level there is an intricate welfare program. Part of the social unrest today is a revolt against so much government intervention in

private lives. If you have something to say today, there is always someone ready to listen--often someone from a news medium. Currently, international war is causing concern. If college students boycott the employment representatives of companies making products used to wage war in Vietnam, if singers refuse to pay their taxes because part of the money goes for national defense, if young men burn their draft cards as a protest against war, millions of Americans know about it within minutes. Coming from all walks of life, these protestors are vocal enough to force a showdown. If the United States government decides to punish them, they must either accept that punishment or leave the country. Sometimes an apology or a public retraction of their statements will exonerate them, and they can begrudgingly return to their dissatisfied existence. *Today, however, we are all instantaneously aware of the forces for change; great groups of people have negated and discarded the idea of adjustment, the watchword of the 50's--and the idea of the power of the individual member of society is pushing itself into a test of its limits and parameters.*

For Jurgis, there was no exoneration. Nothing in his power, including begging, could ameliorate his wrongdoing when it confronted and affronted the powers of Packingtown. He left the city, but in the rural areas he encountered the same impersonal disregard during the season when his labor was not needed as that which he had encountered in the stockyards when he was unable to work. Today the penalty for social foment is usually censure, with the ever-present possibility that you might win your crusade. In Jurgis's day the penalty for social foment was at least starvation, at most murder.

Writing Assignment:

Your writing for this lesson takes the form of a longer, documented theme--sometimes called a term paper. You will turn in (1) a complete-sentence outline which has a thesis statement (what the theme is trying to do and say) followed by supporting statements in at least as much detail as shown below and (2) a titled theme from 1,000-1,250 words (four or five typewritten pages) showing how effectively Sinclair presents his case for socialism in The Jungle. Have at least five page references to actual citations from the novel in your theme. You may feel that Sinclair's presentation is either effective or ineffective; your grade will be determined only by how well you support your contentions. Choose your title after you have written the entire theme.

(Sample Outline)

Thesis Statement: Sinclair's socialistic message becomes too deeply imbedded in repugnance, verbosity, and artificiality to be effective.

I. Many readers are offended by Sinclair's frankness.
   A. The descriptions of the killing beds are offensive.
   B. Marija's life as a prostitute is treated too matter-of-factly.

II. The Jungle is too long a book.
   A. Too many extraneous elements are included.
   B. The plethora of characters detracts from the unity of the book.

III. The socialistic message in Chapter 31 is too contrived.
    A. The ignorant Jurgis could not comprehend the philosophies espoused.
    B. The final paragraph is too dependent upon emotion.

(You may have more than three Roman numerals, but be sure each has an A and a B under it. Choose appropriate short quotations illustrating your points and work them into your theme effectively. Be sure to proofread both your outline and your theme.)

ASSIGNMENT IV

Reading Assignment: The Grapes of Wrath

Fiction: "a division of literature consisting of prose works in narrative form, the characters and incidents of which are wholly or partly imaginary." (Standard College Dictionary) Where truth ends and fiction begins has long been both a private and public debate. Courts determine the truth or fiction in an infinite number of cases each day. In the realm of literature, however, the situation is reversed. When does the author leave his fictional frame of reference and turn to existing people and situations to flesh out his story? One of the most obvious examples of fiction based on fact is Citizen Kane, Orson Welles's fictionalized account of William Randolph Hearst. Looking at two recent, popular books, it is fairly easy to see that the authors had actual people in mind as they told their stories: Harold Robbins (a high school drop-out, incidentally) patterned the main character in The Carpetbaggers after Howard Hughes, "... the man trying to buy Las Vegas;" Jacqueline Susann made one of her ladies in Valley of the Dolls much like Judy Garland, the entertainer. In a less-well-known recent book, Pamela Hansford Johnson's The Survival of the Fittest, an aging English poetess bears a distinct resemblance to Dame Edith Sitwell and a young writer behaves much as Dylan Thomas did, even though Miss Johnson prefaces the book with an "Author's Note":

> Two characters in this book, Belphoebe and Mamonov, may be recognizable as, respectively, a poet now dead and a writer now living.
>
> The first is an affectionate though very slight sketch. The second is only suggested by the original, and in the novel is a much older man. No word of their dialogue has been taken from anything either of them ever at any time actually said, and the incidents surrounding them are invented.

Some readers would contend that In Cold Blood, Truman Capote's "nonfiction novel," should be included with these others.

Some authors go to their offices, close their doors, sit at typewriters, and start fabricating. Other authors feel that they must actually experience situations in order to accurately describe them. You will recall that Sinclair spent seven weeks living with the underprivileged in the Chicago stockyards.

John Steinbeck, too, wanted to base his novels on experience. As early as 1936 Steinbeck called attention to the lot of migrant farm laborers in

California. Then he toured the "Hoovervilles," itinerant workers' camps, picking fruit and cotton, learning about the living and working conditions of the field laborers. His observations were published in October, 1936, in the San Francisco News in a series called "The Harvest Gypsies." The Mexicans and Orientals who had formerly harvested the California crops had been replaced by Okies and Arkies (remember the succession of nationalities in The Jungle), tenant farmers or sharecroppers driven off their land by a combination of natural (soil erosion, dust storms, and drought) and economic (consolidation of many impoverished, mortgaged farms into one plantation or ranch which could be put into cotton and worked by one man with a tractor) forces. For these displaced Okies and Arkies, the chance to pick crops in California where the grapes were "just a-hangin' over into the road" seemed a happy solution. In the fall of 1937 Steinbeck went to Oklahoma where he joined migrants going West and worked with them after they reached California. In April, 1939, was published the novel based on Steinbeck's experiences and observation while he was living with these migrants.

That The Grapes of Wrath is Steinbeck's greatest book is indisputable. That it is one of the outstanding books of this century is generally accepted. It is ideally suited for a module about social consciousness because it approaches a lamentable social situation in two manners, one general and one specific. Of the thirty chapters, sixteen "interchapters" make a general statement about a social situation. In almost every case, the interchapter is followed by a narrative chapter chronicling the Joads' experiences related to the general situation described in the innerchapter. If the reader does not respond to the general, more literary discussion in the interchapter, perhaps he will be moved by the personal tribulations described in the narrative chapter.

The Grapes of Wrath is the story of a family group fighting for survival against other groups. If the Joads are all the Okie families, the Shawnee Land and Cattle Company is all Oklahoma land companies, the California Farmers Association is all the big California agricultural corporations controlled by the Bank of the West, and the workers' union is all the discontented migrant workers banded together. As the Joads weaken and their family group dissolves, the communal group of migrants is born and becomes stronger through the blending of the characteristics of all the families into a united communal group.

One interesting aspect of Steinbeck's non-sentimentalized presentation is his depiction of the Joad family. They are ignorant. They are stubborn. They are impetuous. Throughout the novel, each Joad is "still layin' my dogs down one at a time," seeing nothing other than self, or, at most, family. Much of the hardship this family suffers is the result of their blind faith in a promised land. They follow this faith even when others who preceded them know how chimerical it is and warn them to beware of it. It seems that they have only one redeeming grace with which the reader can sympathize: they are human.

But few people who oppress them want to recognize this. Naturally the capitalistic society has little sympathy for them: unproductive elements must be replaced by productive ones. But the tragedy in this novel is that people who should care, don't. The filling station attendant in Needles considers them not human because a human being wouldn't live as they do. Even other migrants label them "Okies." The novel ends with a poignant scene which illustrates how human the Joad family, as represented by Ma and Rose of Sharon, remain.

One social message of the book is that by willingly banding together, strong individuals can fight the oppression of the banks, growers, policemen, politicians--the entire power structure we idiomatically call "City Hall." The death of Casy is the impetus that Tom needs to find some purpose and method in his fight. Whether Tom and his kind win their fight is unanswered in the novel (--and, indeed, at the time of the novel the problem hadn't been resolved). The weak are dead; the strong are at last beginning to unite. Although things could not get much worse, Steinbeck gives the tacit promise that they will get better. (Have they?)

Writing Assignment:

Because your last writing assignment was a long one, for this lesson you will be given a much shorter assignment. For each of the three topics below, compose a thesis statement which you could develop into a complete theme. Be sure that your statement is general enough to allow you sufficient leeway to include any pertinent comments and specific enough to show that you have given careful thought to what you will definitely include. As you have probably found in your writing experiences both for this module and your other school work, you seldom finish a theme with exactly what you planned to include in it. (Here is an example to guide you in writing your thesis statements. Topic: Ma's function in the novel. Thesis statement: Although the Joad family unit does dissolve eventually in The Grapes of Wrath, Ma nonetheless fulfills her function by remaining a source of strength and comfort for the family and a formidable object opposing those who would do harm to those she loves.)

Topics for which you are to compose a thesis statement:

1. In what sense can Casy be called a religious man?
2. What picture does Steinbeck paint of police officers?
3. How does the land turtle introduced in the beginning of Chapter Four represent the novel as a whole?

ASSIGNMENT V

One complaint that my students frequently voice comes when we are studying a work of literature in detail. They ask how I know that the burning ship is a symbol of the United States, that the moral of the story is "youth is impetuous," that the small sailing cloud's hitting the moon means death, and on like that. In some literature the symbolism and/or message is obvious; in others it is hidden and can be found only if you make a conscious effort to follow the clues the writer has given you. In a final type, there is no symbolism.

One obvious example of an author's intent to give significance to seemingly minor details is story titles. Think for a moment about these titles: For Whom the Bell Tolls, The Paths of Glory, and The Sound and the Fury. The first title is from John Donne's "Devotions XVII":

> Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.

Anyone who has read Hemingway's book knows how the title applies to Robert Jordan, the main character.

The second title sounds too noble to be associated with a war novel, but not if one knows the lines from Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard":

> The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,
> And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
> Await alike the inevitable hour:
> The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

The final title has a dignified tone, but William Faulkner chose it well for a story partially told by an idiot; in Shakespeare's Macbeth the complete quotation has a rather pessimistic meaning:

> Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
> And then is heard no more: it is a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> Signifying nothing.

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Equally obvious symbolism occurs in names. If a giant of a man has the last name Small, there is a reason. Is it coincidental that an author gives the name Crooks to a man with a crooked back? The main character in one of W. Somerset Maugham's short stories, "The Colonel's Lady," has the name Peregrine. This character is indeed *peregrine*, or foreign, in his relationship with his wife, or as Maugham calls her in the title, lady.

Sometimes an author includes a symbol and immediately explains it to the reader. In "Young Goodman Brown," a short story by Nathaniel Hawthorne, a scene having two blazing pines and a rock between them is described. The scene is the setting for a pseudo-religious rite, but Hawthorne so much wanted the reader to recognize his symbols that he likened them to burning candles and an altar immediately after describing them.

Whenever you make a search for symbols, keep one guide in mind. Unless an item is an obvious symbol, be sure that it appears more than once before you attach too much symbolistic importance to it.

Let's examine the title The Grapes of Wrath. Most of us remember Julia Ward Howe's Battle Hymn of the Republic and the famous lines:

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord;
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored.

Some of us might even be familiar with Revelation 14:19-20:

> And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God
> And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress. . . .

Looking in Steinbeck's book, we see the significance of grapes several times. On p. 81, Grandpa says, "Well, sir, we'll be a-startin' 'fore long now. An', by God, they's grapes out there, just a'hangin' over inta the road. Know what I'm gonna do? I'm gonna pick me a wash tub full a grapes, an' I'm gonna set in 'em, an' scrooge aroun', an' let the juice run down my pants." Ten pages later, his dream still brightens his existence: "Come time we get to California I'll have a big bunch a grapes in my han' all the time, a-nibblin' off it all the time, by God!" By p. 217 the grapes haven't materialized; they are to be picked later. By p. 311 it has become obvious what the California grapes are really like: "In the souls of the people the grapes of wrath are filling and growing heavy, growing heavy for the vintage."

The information included in the preceding paragraph is the nucleus of a longer treatment about the symbolistic significance of the title. Using the examples I have presented, you could write a good, documented theme telling the relationship of the title to the book as a whole. But how good a theme

could you write were I to give you the topic: How does the book The Grapes of Wrath parallel the exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt to Cannaan? Not too good a theme, I assume, because you probably know little about the Hebrew exodus. Scholars, however, have found much similarity between these two subjects. Peter Lisca's The Wide World of John Steinbeck shows the correspondence of the novel's three obvious divisions--drought (Chapters One through Ten), journey (Chapters Eleven through Eighteen), and struggles in California (Chapters Nineteen through Thirty)--to oppression in Egypt, exodus, and settlement in Canaan. If you are interested in a complete discussion of this aspect of the novel as well as a perceptive approach to the meaning of the title, try to find Lisca's book in your local library. (You might also read The Book of Exodus in a modern version of The Bible.)

A major theme of social consciousness which Steinbeck develops in his book is the plight of the unassimilated individual. Just as the Joads are helpless while independently trying to fight the system that has destroyed thousands like them--allowing people to starve while fruit rots on the ground--so the individual orchard and farm owners are powerless to fight the Farmers Association run by the Bank of the West. Mr. Thomas wants to pay thirty cents an hour, but the bank member tells him to pay twenty-five to prevent unrest and asks the threatening question, "By the way, you going to need the usual amount for a crop loan next year?" (p. 262) The cotton grower complains, "The Association sets the rate, and we got to mind. If we don't--we ain't got a farm. Little fella gets crowded all the time." (p. 376) Even those who wish to help the workingman are powerless by themselves.

Writing Assignment:

Since this lesson marks the mid-point in this module, it is time for you to take the Midsemester Examination. You are free to use any books and/or notes you wish.

MIDSEMESTER EXAMINATION

Choose ONE of the following questions and answer it in a concise, well-organized theme of two-to-five handwritten pages, referring frequently to the novels we have studied. If your answer takes two pages, I'm assuming that what you include is complete enough to develop your thesis. If your answer takes five pages, I'm assuming that nothing extraneous is included. Never confuse quantity with quality. Underline your thesis statement (what the theme is about) and circle your controlling word (what idea you will be stressing). EXAMPLE: Ma Joad is a stabilizing force in The Grapes of Wrath.

1. Of The Jungle and The Grapes of Wrath, which book presents a social situation which is in more urgent need of correction at the time? Why?

2. Is The Jungle or The Grapes of Wrath a more believable book as far as criticism of the perpetuation of social injustice by moneyed interests is concerned? Remember that both authors were knowledgable individuals.

3. If Jurgis Rudkus and Tom Joad are men seeking an identity in society, which has a better chance of finding that identity? Why?

4. In The Jungle, Sinclair openly proposes socialism as the salvation of the working man. In The Grapes of Wrath, what does Steinbeck offer as a possible salvation for the working man? Be sure to document your answer with page numbers.

5. What does the discrimination against the individual in The Jungle or The Grapes of Wrath say about society? (Discrimination here means "cheating.")

6. If both The Jungle and The Grapes of Wrath are novels to arouse social consciousness for impoverished people, which book ends on a more optimistic note? Why?

ASSIGNMENT VI

Reading Assignment: Of Mice and Men

Two years before The Grapes of Wrath appeared, Steinbeck was continuing his experimentation with the play-novelette form. His goal was to produce a combination short novel and drama, employing the dialogue to present such stage necessities as entrances and exits and directions such as physical descriptions of scenes. Each chapter consists of one scene and opens with a description of the scene. The result of his experimentation, Of Mice and Men, gained quick acceptance and won for its author selection as one of the ten outstanding young men of the year. Its appearance in play form was heralded and honored with the New York Drama Critic Circle Award. (The Pulitzer Prize went to Thornton Wilder for Our Town.) In 1941 Steinbeck's play-novelette was made into a motion picture.

In Assignment V we discussed titles. Steinbeck's original title for this book was Something That Happened; then he re-titled it Of Mice and Men. Those of you with a background in English literature probably remember Robert Burn's famous poem "To a Mouse," a poem about a fieldmouse whose nest is destroyed by a plow. The message of this poem by a poet regarded as a spokesman for mankind is contained in the famous line, "The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men gang aft agley." Steinbeck chose enough of this quotation to give the title relevance to the explicit action as well as to foreshadow the outcome of George and Lennie's plan.

In The Grapes of Wrath we saw men trying to organize to fight the system oppressing them. In Of Mice and Men, an earlier book, there is no thought of organization by any of the workers, but they still live for the dream found in almost all of Steinbeck's work: a place of their own, a little patch of land where they can work and enjoy the fruits of their own production. Maybe they could even take time off to go to a ball game or circus.

In the story of George and Lennie there is no easily discernible mythical pattern that so often appears in Steinbeck's books, although some critics find evidence of Steinbeck's usage of the Arthurian legend: George is the pure knight protecting the weak Lennie from oppression and temptation.

George and Lennie's dream of a place of their own comes again and again, almost in the form of a ritual. Lennie lives a happier life because he can frequently get George to forsake reality and put into words their planned

escape from the life it appears they are destined to lead:

> George's voice became deeper. He repeated his words rhythmically as though he had said them many times before. 'Guys like us, that work on ranches, are the loneliest guys in the world. They come to a ranch an' work up a stake and then they go inta town and blow their stake, and the first thing you know they're poundin' their tail on some other ranch. They ain't got nothing to look ahead to.' (pp. 14-15)

But it's not that way with them; Lennie knows they're going to "live off the fatta the lan'." (p. 15) They're going to have the one thing important in Lennie's life: some soft, furry rabbits for him to pet. At last they will belong.

These two dreamers drift from place to place always going to get their stake together but never quite doing it because of Lennie. For example, when they were in Weed, Lennie's child-like fascination with soft things and bright colors got them in trouble, almost got them lynched.

After they get settled in the last of many California ranches they have worked on, it appears that they finally have their goal within grasp. The swamper Candy has $350 they can use for a down payment if they'll let him come along and do odd jobs. If they can last out the month on the job, the $600 ranch will be theirs at last.

But a variety of forces denies them their dream.

Let's look at social forces which directly and indirectly work against the pair of itinerant workers and others like them. First comes the bus driver who lets them out over four miles from their destination, supposedly because he is one of the uncaring mass of people who have it in their power to help unfortunates but do not because doing so would involve a little extra effort. Reporting late to the job could have meant that there was no job.

Once George and Lennie get their job, they are treated with suspicion by the boss who tells George not to try anything because he will be watched closely.

The appearance of first Curley's wife and then Curley is another indication that some external force is working against the new hands. The flirtatious woman's visit to the bunkhouse portends an evil which both men recognize, but they are powerless to leave. They don't like the situation but they must stay until they get their stake. If the people at Weed had been understanding, had been the type to let George tell what had really happened to the girl, the men might have been able to get enough of a stake that they wouldn't be compromised into remaining in an obviously threatening environment. Curley's appearance is as inauspicious for the new hands as was his wife's. Curley tests his mettle on first Slim and then Carlson. Realizing their strength, he turns to the person who looks big but weak, Lennie, who unfortunately is still smilingly

entranced by the dream of a place of their own. Curley has little to lose, being the boss's son. He also has social sympathy on his side. As Candy says:

> Never did seem right to me. S'pose Curley jumps a big guy and licks him. Ever'body says what a game guy Curley is. And s'pose he does the same thing and gets licked. Then ever'body says the big guy oughtta pick somebody his own size, and maybe they gang up on the big guy. Never did seem right to me. Seems like Curley ain't givin' nobody a chance.

On the other hand, Curley (or society) has no sympathy for the weak.

Nowhere in the novel is there a place in a society for the weak. Candy knows that he'll be turned out as soon as he can't swamp anymore. The trouble Curley's malicious wife could get Crooks into might result in a lynching. Even the deformed Crooks revels in tormenting Lennie when he senses the stupidity and gullibility of the big man. After Lennie kills the woman, there is little doubt about his fate: "S'pose they lock him up an' strap him down and put him in a cage." (p. 106) In the mid-1930's there was little in the way of treatment and understanding for the mentally retarded.

With the death of Lennie ends the dream: George had told the story so often he had almost come to believe it. With the burden of Lennie removed from his responsibility, with final freedom to get the place of his own, George ironically gives up on the dream. Maybe the social system was too much for him.

Writing Assignment:

Group I

Choose ONE of the following questions and answer it in a 400-600 word theme. Underline your thesis statement and circle the controlling word.

1. Steinbeck obviously created a parallel between Candy's dog and Lennie. For example, both the dog and Lennie are killed. Give a complete analysis of ways in which they are similar and tell why you think Steinbeck made them similar.

2. Read Robert Burns's short poem "To a Mouse." After reading Of Mice and Men, do you feel that Steinbeck chose his title wisely? Why?

3. Does George continue his relationship with Lennie because of sympathy for Lennie or because he likes to feel superior to Lennie? (Your answer must be documented carefully; to answer this question you must re-read the text carefully.)

Group II

Choose ONE of the following questions and answer it in a 400-600 word theme. Underline your thesis statement and circle the controlling word.

1. Tell why the title Of Mice and Men is particularly appropriate for the story Steinbeck relates.

2. By referring to particular parts of the book, support the contention that the heron and snakes at the beginning of Chapter 6 are symbols.

3. The sympathy and understanding of which character (other than George, of course) is most important in Of Mice and Men? Does this character's sympathy have universal (for all men, at all times) implications?

ASSIGNMENT VII

Reading Assignment: the play version of Of Mice and Men

The play version of Of Mice and Men was briefly discussed in the first paragraph of Assignment VI. In this assignment, we will look more closely at it.

First, however, let's make a slight digression. Answer this question as quickly as you can: why did Steinbeck write the novel Of Mice and Men? Since this module is concerned with social consciousness, you probably gave an answer mentioning the author's concern for people and how society treats them.

Now let me ask you a second question: why did Steinbeck make his novel into a play? Was it for the same public-spirited, altruistic reason? Or could he have been capitalizing on the popularity of his novel? After all, when we examine the play we will see that it is very similar to the novel. If you feel that Steinbeck decided he could "make a quick buck" with an easy adaptation of a novel that was almost a play to begin with, do you also feel that Steinbeck initially had profit from both a written and dramatic form of his story in mind when he wrote the story? Knowing Steinbeck's writing as a whole, I feel sure that the purpose for most of his writing was to bring to public attention situations about which he felt strongly--usually, remember, because he knew about them from first-hand experience. To me, it seems that Steinbeck realized that the theater would be another medium which he could use to present his message. Also, keep in mind that two of Steinbeck's most recent works, Travels with Charley (1962) and America and Americans (1966) both deal with the make-up and social characteristics of the American population and scene.

Since the space limitations of this module prohibit a complete comparison of the novel and the drama, we will examine first the introduction of the two main characters, then a discussion about Curley, then a scene with Lennie and Crooks, and finally the conclusion.

When we compare the first two pages of the novel with the first page of the play, we notice the pattern which each work will take pertaining to the presentation of detail and ideas:

PLAY	NOVEL
sheltered with willows	willows fresh and green with every

	spring, carrying in their lower leaf junctures the debris of winter's flooding
covered with dry leaves	the leaves lie deep and so crisp that a lizard makes a great skittering if he runs among them
The first man throws down his blanket roll, the large man follows	The first man was small and quick, dark of face, with restless eyes and sharp, strong features. Every part of him was defined: small, strong hands, slender arms, a thin and bony nose. Behind him walked his opposite, a huge man, shapeless of face, with large, pale eyes, and wide sloping shoulders; and he walked heavily, dragging his feet a little, the way a bear drags his paws. His arms did not swing at his sides, but hung loosely.

From these brief excerpts it is fairly obvious what are the strengths and weaknesses of each form. First, the novel has more space, can include more words. Second, the novel can guide you to conclusions which the play cannot: in the theater you see Lennie walk and try to think who or what walks that way; in the book you don't have that problem because the author tells you, "the way a bear drags his paws." Third, the novel can do more than present scenery: it can give the scene thematic significance: willows carrying "the debris of winter's flooding." Whether George and Lennie can be considered social debris is a moot point, but such a possibility definitely exists. Finally, the novel has the important advantage of presenting a picture which, although complete, is still dependent upon the mind's eye of the beholder. The closest the theater can come to allowing the audience to create its own picture of the scene is either to have blurred, hazy sets or to have no stage setting at all. Thus far, it appears that the novel has all the advantages. And it really does, except that the theater gives its audience a heightened sense of immediacy and identity. The play-goer sees and "knows" what the reader only imagines.

If you (or John Steinbeck and George Kaufman) were casting the play version to open November 23, 1937, at the Music Box Theater, who would you choose to portray Lennie: Lee J. Cobb, Broderick Crawford, Melvyn Douglas, or Spencer Tracy? Which of these actors, to you, would be the best Lennie? Broderick Crawford played the part. (Not knowing which actors were considered for the part, I have used the other three actors for illustrative purposes only.) In the 1941 movie version, Burgess Meredith, Lon Chaney, Jr., and Betty Field played the roles of George, Lennie, and Curley's wife, respectively. (The later television special starred George Segal as George.)

Next let's compare the preparations for the introduction of Curley. Both versions treat him essentially the same. What is the difference in these two

versions of Candy's speech?

PLAY

You know, it never did seem right to me. 'Spose Curley jumps a big guy and licks him. Everybody says what a game guy Curley is. Well, 'spose he jumps 'im and gits licked, everybody says the big guy oughtta pick somebody his own size. Seems like Curley ain't given' nobody a chance. (p. 321)

NOVEL

Never did seem right to me. S'pose Curley jumps a big guy and licks him. Ever'body says what a game guy Curley is. And s'pose he does the same thing and gets licked. Then ever'body says the big guy oughtta pick somebody his own size, and maybe they gang up on the big guy. Never did seem right to me. Seems like Curley ain't given' nobody a chance. (p. 29)

To me, the novel version is a little clearer in the part about Curley's getting licked, but the variation in wording is not clearly superior in either instance. The novel version does provide the author with the space to repeat the very important judgment that this situation doesn't seem right (that there is a tendency in society to stack the cards in favor of certain select individuals). Since the play form has no stage directions telling how the first sentence is supposed to be spoken, it is safe to assume that no special emphasis, such as that given by repetition in the novel, is intended.

Since the novel form appeared before the play form, Steinbeck had the opportunity to make any changes he felt necessary to improve the play in comparison with the novel. The most obvious change is in the final scene. The indictment against a disinterested society, especially in the form of the crass Carlson, is omitted from the stage version. A less obvious change is present throughout the play, but I will cite only one brief passage here. Lennie visits Crooks in the stable:

PLAY

CROOKS. You go on and get out of my room. I ain't wanted in the bunkhouse and you ain't wanted in my room.
LENNIE [ingenuously]. Why ain't you wanted?
CROOKS [furiously]. 'Cause I'm black. They play cards in there. But I can't play because I'm black. They say I stink, Well, I tell you all of you stink to me.
LENNIE [helplessly]. Everybody went into town. Slim and George and everybody. George says I got to stay here and not get into no trouble. I seen your light. (p. 355)

NOVEL

"You go on get outta my room. I ain't wanted in the bunk house, and you ain't wanted in my room."
"Why ain't you wanted?" Lennie asked.
"'Cause I'm black. They play cards in there, but I can't play because I'm black. They say I stink. Well, I tell you, you all of you stink to me."
Lennie flapped his big hands helplessly. "Ever'body went into town," he said, "Slim an' George an' every'body. George says I gotta stay here an' not get in no trouble. I seen your light." (p. 75)

What has Steinbeck done in the stage version? Simply, he has upgraded the speech patterns of the characters. Although the words are essentially the same in both cases, the stage characters speak better English. Why? One possible reason is that actors might have a hard time pronouncing the words as they appear in the novel. A more plausible reason is that the audience might have a hard time understanding the words of the novel. When we are reading words, we can stop and re-examine those that puzzle us. When we are listening, perhaps from a seat in the rear of the balcony, we have difficulty appreciating and understanding a drama if we cannot understand what is being said. Another plausible reason is that the audience might not wish to accept the slurred language of the ranch hands; the audience might think this language too exaggerated. In other words, Steinbeck keeps the language for each form as believable a form as possible--and he does, as all good playwrights do, allow leeway for an actor (and a director) to actively interpret character.

The final comparison we will make is in the conclusions of the two versions:

PLAY

GEORGE. That's right. It's gonna be nice there. Ain't gonna be no trouble, no fights. Nobody ever gonna hurt nobody, or steal from 'em. It's gonna be--nice.
LENNIE: I can see it, George. I can see it! Right over there! I can see it!
[George fires. Lennie crumples; falls behind the brush. The voices of the men in the distance.]
(p. 383)

NOVEL

Lennie begged, "Le's do it now. Le's get that place now."

"Sure, right now. I gotta. We gotta."

And George raised the gun and steadied it, and he brought the muzzle of it close to the back of Lennie's head. The hand shook violently, but his face set and his hand steadied. He pulled the trigger. The crash of the shot rolled up the hills and rolled down again. Lennie jarred, and then settled slowly forward to the sand, and he lay without quivering.
(p. 117)

Obviously, the stage ending is much happier and clear cut, especially when you consider that the novel contains another page of development following the passage quoted above. The ending of the novel, Carlson's fatuous question, "Now what the hell ya suppose is eatin' them two guys," may have been too puzzling for a theater audience which had missed many of the indirect comments presented in the novel form.

On the whole, each version fills a particular need. People leaving the theater have had everything fairly well spelled out for them and don't have to worry about the future. Readers must still wonder when people like Carlson will care, what George will do, and whether Lennie did "see" their place.

Writing Assignment:

Group I

Write a 400-700 word theme comparing the two forms of Of Mice and Men and stressing which one does a better job of delivering a message of social consciousness. Underline your thesis statement and circle the controlling word.

Group II

Write a 400-600 word theme stating the message Steinbeck is getting across in both the novel and the play forms of Of Mice and Men. Support your statement by including specific passages stating the message. Underline your thesis statement and circle the controlling word.

ASSIGNMENT VIII

Reading Assignment: To Kill a Mockingbird

The last book we will study is To Kill a Mockingbird, a 1960 novel which deals with several social problems--growing up, the status of the Negro in the South, and small-town attitudes toward "different" people. Because we are concerned with social consciousness, we will skim over the growing-up aspect of the novel by mentioning that Scout, Jem, and Dill experience situations which are considered routine in the maturation process. Miss Lee expresses the simple experiences in an often-charming manner and the unique experiences in a tense, exciting manner.

Any novel dealing with the Negro in the South should take a stand. Either the dark-skinned people are people or they are niggers in the worst sense of the word. If you have been in the South, or just about anywhere else, if you are "aware," you have seen prejudice. Almost daily in the South the situation betters, but giving Negroes access to drinking fountains, rest rooms, and seats in the front of the bus does not end prejudice. For generations of Southerners who know nothing but hatred and distaste for Negroes, only the passing of another generation can ameliorate the prejudice.

Two characters in To Kill a Mockingbird have a problem. Tom Robinson's problem is obvious: he's a Negro accused of raping a white girl. Atticus Finch's problem is equally obvious: he's a white lawyer "going against his raising" and defending a nigger. It is interesting to note that Miss Lee places both men in physical danger: Tom from the law and Atticus from a group of disgruntled citizens. The reader senses that the equanimity of Atticus will suffice but that the honesty and worth of Tom will not be allowed to suffice because of his color.

A good starting point for our analysis of the situation in Maycomb is the attitude toward black people. As early as p. 15 we see how the sheriff feels when he doesn't have the heart to put Boo Radley, who had just driven the scissors into his father's leg, "in jail alongside Negroes." Later Miss Lee describes the Maycomb jail as a "miniature Gothic joke" or a "Victorian privy" and says "no stranger would ever suspect that it was full of niggers." (pp. 152-153) Apparently, white lawbreakers always received bench paroles. Mr. Gilmer, the prosecuting attorney, insultingly addresses Tom as boy or buck. Even the innocence of youth has been prejudiced, as we see in Scout's comment, "after all he's just a Negro." (p. 201)

Next, let's examine the attitude toward another social phenomenon, the Ewell family. Early in the novel Atticus says that common folk must obey the law, but the Ewells are members of an exclusive society for which the law is bent. (p. 35) Miss Lee mentions that in a town the size of Maycomb there is always a family like the Ewells, living "as guests of the county in prosperity as well as in the depths of a depression." (p. 172) The Ewells are what some people would call "poor white trash" and interestingly enough they live behind the town garbage dump in what was once a Negro cabin. The drunken, haughty Robert E. Lee Ewell is the "provider" for this family and a man who can feel superior toward the only people in a lower social position than he: "Jedge, I've asked this county for fifteen years to clean out that [nigger] nest down yonder, they're dangerous to live around 'sides devaluin' my property." (p. 177)

Mayella Violet Ewell is a nineteen-year-old "victim of cruel poverty and ignorance," according to Atticus. (p. 206) To Scout, she "must have been the loneliest person in the world. She was even lonelier than Boo Radley." (p. 194) The whites wouldn't have anything to do with her because she lived among pigs, and blacks wouldn't have anything to do with her because she was white. No wonder the Ewells were resentful when "Maycomb gave them Christmas baskets, welfare money, and the back of its hand." (p. 194) In Maycomb, prejudice is not restricted to color: it can be broadened to include poor white trash.

Tom Robinson's trial as a whole is a formality which illustrates the time-worn cliche, "We'll give you a fair trial and then we'll hang you." Atticus knows that he will lose because he and other people fighting for the integrity of the black man in the South were licked a hundred years before they started. Atticus tells his brother that the jury couldn't possibly be expected to take the word of a black over that of a white. Mayella puts it in elemental but accurate terms: "That nigger yonder took advantage of me an' if you fine fancy gentlemen don't wanta do nothin' about it then you're all yellow stinkin' cowards, the lot of you." (p. 190) Miss Maudie gives the best explanation of the whole situation when she says, "Atticus Finch won't win, he can't win, but he's the only man in these parts who can keep a jury out so long in a case like that. And I thought to myself, well, we're making a step--it's just a baby-step, but it's a step." (pp. 218-219)

An interesting side light in To Kill a Mockingbird is the description of miscegnation, the intermarriage of races. Just as the poor Mayella is not wanted by either race, the mixed child doesn't belong anywhere either. Dolphus Raymond, white father of children by a black woman, supposedly shipped two of his children up North because people wouldn't mind them so much up there. In Scout and Jem's conversation about recognizing mixed children, Lee humorously gets across the important social point that people will be prejudiced against mixed children even if the children appear to be of one race. (p. 164)

Another sidelight is Boo Radley. Although Miss Lee is a little "preachy" in her treatment of Boo, she nonetheless makes a significant parallel between

the unthinking prejudice of the children toward Boo and the calculated prejudice of their elders against Tom Robinson and Robert E. Lee Ewell.

Utilizing a readable style and an often-exciting narrative, Miss Lee has pointedly, but inoffensively, criticized the social bigotry of white against black and rich against poor.

Writing Assignment:

Group I

Choose ONE of the following questions and discuss it in a theme of 500-700 words. Underline your thesis statement and circle the controlling word.

1. Which social situation is more lamentable: prejudice against Tom Robinson or prejudice against Robert E. Lee Ewell? Why?

2. In what respect is Dill representative of a social problem which needs improvement?

3. Critics have found fault with the superior intellect of Scout. Does Harper Lee justify the precociousness of Scout, or does it seem, to you, too contrived?

Group II

Choose ONE of the following questions and discuss it in a theme of 500-700 words. Underline your thesis statement and circle the controlling word.

1. Is there any moral that Harper Lee is trying to get across by telling the story of Boo Radley? What is it?

2. Is the title To Kill a Mockingbird in any way related to the social-consciousness message delivered by the author?

3. The existence of a pathetic social situation has killed one man (Tom Robinson) and labelled another man (Atticus Finch) a "nigger lover." From what has happened in the book, do you think that the community has made any steps toward the awakening of social consciousness for the black people (in general, not Tom in particular)?

ASSIGNMENT IX

Reading Assignment: three reviews of To Kill a Mockingbird

Thus far in this module you have read four novels and one drama which deal with the authors' attempts to present in dramatic form a social situation which needs concern and solution.

Upton Sinclair (The Jungle) saw the evils of Packingtown, U.S.A., and reported them to a nation which about the same time was shocked into action by the embalmed beef scandal of the Spanish-American War. The passage of the Federal Food and Drugs and the Meat Inspection Acts in 1906 can be largely attributed to the crusading of Sinclair.

With Steinbeck's work (The Grapes of Wrath and Of Mice and Men), it is less easy to see immediate, specific social action and reform. Most of us would agree, however, that informing the public about lamentable, unjust situations always inspires a few humanitarians to action.

The social significance of Harper Lee's novel (To Kill a Mockingbird, 1960) will be hard to pinpoint because her message is of the soft-sell variety. Militant blacks telling Miss Lee's story would be less allegorical and more blatantly assertive about the injustice to their fellows in the South. Of the literally hundreds of books about the social status of American Negroes in recent history, I chose To Kill a Mockingbird for two reasons. First, it is unimpassioned in its message; the wrongs of society to Tom Robinson, Boo Radley, and the Ewells are obvious, but the author does not suggest a forceful upheaval with ensuing violence and death. Second, it has stood the test of time. In addition to winning the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1961, it has been a best seller translated into ten foreign languages. (In the popular movie version, Gregory Peck plays the role of Atticus Finch.) More people have been exposed to Miss Lee's ideas than to other works which consider the racial situation.

For your last assignment in the social consciousness module, you will read three reviews of To Kill a Mockingbird. Theoretically, all readers are reviewers. Most of us review a book by saying, "Yeah, it was good." "Not bad." "I've read better." "Lousy." Were we to put our review in writing, however, we would have to make it more precise in terms of both language and criticism. You have just read Miss Lee's book: you are at the same starting point as a professional reviewer. The reviewer has the double advantage of a better background and more writing experience, but your intelligent views about the book, barring the necessity for any special background knowledge, should be as significant as his, even though yours may be less incisive.

As you read each review, try to see if the reviewer is doing his job. Most libraries contain books about how to review books, but as you well know, the helpful guidelines an experienced writer sets up are only as valuable as the reader's ability to understand and use them. Ask yourself if the reviewer answers these four important questions about the book:

1. What is the author trying to do?
2. How does he do it?
3. How well does he do it?
4. Was it worth doing?

SUMMER READING

By Phoebe Adams

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CHILDREN PLAY; ADULTS BETRAY

By Harding Lemay

In her first novel, "To Kill a Mockingbird," Harper Lee makes a valiant attempt to combine two dominant themes of contemporary Southern fiction--the recollection of childhood among village eccentrics and the spirit-corroding shame of the civilized white Southerner in the treatment of the Negro. If her attempt fails to produce a novel of stature, or even of original insight, it does provide an exercise in easy, graceful writing and some genuinely moving and mildly humorous excursions into the transient world of childhood.

Set during the depression, the story is recalled from the distance of maturity by Jean Louise ("Scout") Finch, whose widowed father, Atticus, was a civilized, tolerant lawyer in a backward Alabama town. An older brother, Jem, and a summer visitor from Mississippi, Dill share Scout's adventures and speculations among figures not totally unfamiliar to readers of Carson McCullers, Eudora Welty, and Truman Capote. The three children, supervised by an intelligent, perceptive Negro housekeeper, Calpurnia, play their games of test and dare with ill-tempered old ladies, buzzing village gossips, and, most especially, with the mysterious occupant of the house next door who has never been seen outside since his father locked him up over fifteen years earlier. It is through Boo Radley whose invisible presence tantalizes the children, that Miss Lee builds the most effective part of her novel: an exploration of the caution and curiosity between which active children expend their energies and imaginations.

In the second half of the novel, Atticus defends a Negro accused of raping a white girl. The children add to their more innocent games that of watching a Southern court in action. They bring to the complexities of legal argument the same luminous faith in justice that sweeps through their games, and they watch, with dismay and pain, as the adult world betrays them. And here, perhaps because we have not been sufficiently prepared for the darkness and the shadows, the book loses strength and seems contrived. For everything happens as we might expect. The children are stained with terror and the knowledge of unreasoning hatreds but gain in insight and in compassion, and the author, deliberately using Atticus and an elderly widow as mouthpieces, makes her points about the place of civilized man in the modern South.

The two themes Miss Lee interweaves throughout the novel emerge as enemies of each other. The charm and wistful humor of the childhood recollections do not foreshadow the deeper, harsher note which pervades the later pages of the

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book. The Negro, the poor white girl who victimizes him, and the wretched community spirit that defeats him, never rise in definition to match the eccentric, vagrant, and appealing characters with which the story opens. The two worlds remain solitary in spite of Miss Lee's grace of writing and honorable decency of intent.

ONE TAXI-TOWN

By Frank H. Lyell

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Writing Assignment:

It is now time for the final examination. The best preparation you can make is to review each selection we have read in terms of what message of social consciousness is delivered, how it is delivered, and how significant the message is.

The question you will answer will be generally stated, but your grade will depend on how well you give a logical, supported, specific answer. Feel free to use any notes or texts you wish.

Good luck!

Afterword

A module limited to ¼ unit credit can only skim the surface of a particular facet of literature. For those students interested in a more complete sampling of books dealing with social consciousness, I recommend the following:

Title	Author
McTeague	Frank Norris
Sister Carrie	Theodore Dreiser
Main Street	Sinclair Lewis
Babbitt	Sinclair Lewis
The 42nd Parallel	John Dos Passos
The Sun Also Rises	Ernest Hemingway
The Great Gatsby	F. Scott Fitzgerald
A Separate Peace	John Knowles

This additional sampling in conjunction with the novels you read for this module will give you a more complete view of some of the social situations in twentieth century America which authors have felt compelled to bring to public attention.